

## **CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**December 1, 2014**

### **MINUTES**

With quorum present, Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm.

**Present:** Vern Bennett, Gail Bollinger, Ken Pawluk, Brian Hagen, Chad Peterson, Mary Scherling, Darrel Vanyo

**Presenters:** Chip Ammerman, Director

#### **I. Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Scherling made a motion to approve the November 3, 2014 Board minutes. Ms. Bollinger seconded the motion. Motion carried.

#### **II. 2015 Contracts**

Mr. Ammerman shared the 2015 contracts, which include homemaker services and six months of adult protection services, have been sent to Mr. Burdick for his review and approval. The contracts will be included on the January agenda for the Board's approval.

#### **III. Governor's Proposed Budget**

The Board discussed the decision to discontinue funding Adult Protection Services effective June 30, 2015, unless funding is provided by the state. Mr. Ammerman distributed the Department of Human Services OAR Descriptions for the 2015-2017 Biennium. Included in the budget proposal is 100% funding for Adult Protection Services for the southeast region of the state. Guardianship funds for vulnerable adults is also included in the Governor's budget. There is an increase in child care provider rates, which have not been increased since October 2012. This will affect both the qualifying income of parents and also the reimbursement rate to providers of child care services. Additional discussions include increasing the program cost reimbursement because ACA impacts is not included in the SWAP reimbursement. Providing full funding of social service costs to the county or possibly having them move to the state system continues to be discussed. The Director's Association continues to advocate for local control, with funding in order to provide services. Mr. Ammerman stated the Signs of Safety, Alternative Response approach, has been used in Cass County for many years. The state is now beginning to explore this approach when working with families.

#### **IV. Economic Assistance Update**

Mr. Ammerman stated the increase in cases due to the Affordable Care Act has been significant, resulting in an increase of approximately 400 new cases per month. In addition, the continued inefficiency of the computer systems used by Economic

Assistance staff, ongoing changes in policy and interpretation, and consistently high caseloads have affected the morale of the division. The division went paperless in July which changed processes and has resulted in a backlog of scanning, making it difficult for staff to work cases. Caseload standards for the state are 160 and Cass County staff average 215-225 cases. Staff are reporting feeling a high level stress which is affecting customer service and quality, due to the increase in caseloads. With ongoing changes and retirements, staff report feeling there is no end to the increase in stress. Mr. Ammerman requested the Board's assistance to provide support for Economic Assistance staff who continue to work under very high demands.

The Board is receptive to exploring options to assist staff and requested Mr. Ammerman develop a plan including: streamlining tasks to create efficiencies, making the best use of existing resources, new resources that may be needed, and review of staffing patterns to make the best use of space. It was also suggested to use volunteers when possible. The Board recommended dedicating the January, 2015, meeting to this topic and requested Mr. Ammerman have a plan available for discussion at that time.

**V. Operating Report**

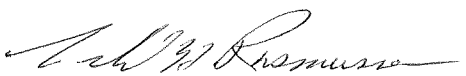
There were no additions, changes or discussion on the report provided.

**VI. Adjournment**

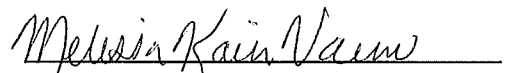
Mr. Vanyo thanked Gail Bollinger and Brian Hagen for their dedication as the at large members of the Social Services Board. Mr. Vanyo acknowledged Social Services is a complex department and the services provided to the people of Cass County are understated.

Mr. Ammerman thanked Commissioner Vanyo and Commissioner Bennett for their support on the Social Services Board and wished them well in retirement. He welcomed Rick Steen and Arland Rasmussen to the Board.

Ms. Scherling made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:15 pm. Mr. Bennett seconded it. Motion carried.



Arland Rasmussen, Chair  
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varno, Recorder